



Bill 59

Surfrider Foundation Oahu Chapter

Web: [oahu.surfrider.org](http://oahu.surfrider.org)

Contact: [rbergstrom@surfrider.org](mailto:rbergstrom@surfrider.org)

Mail: P.O. BOX 283092 Honolulu, HI, 96828

Oct. 4, 2016

To: Honolulu City Council

From: The Surfrider Foundation O'ahu Chapter

Re: Support for Bill 59 with amendments (Bag Ban Amendment)

Date of Hearing: Oct. 5th, Kapolei

Aloha, Council Members,

As the Coordinator of the Surfrider Foundation's O'ahu Chapter, I am reaching out to you in support of Bill 59 if it considers some slight amendments. Grocery bags are one of the most littered items in Hawaii and across the country, and have documented high expense for cleanup. A United Nations report in 2014 indicated that the cost of cleaning up plastics from the ocean alone is underestimated at \$13 billion – plastic bags and foam containers being one of the biggest culprit as they clog storm drains and blow easily into our oceans. In the State of Hawai'i the Department of Transportation recently released a public draft of their trash plan, again showing plastic bags and foam to be the most detrimental sources of plastic to clean up. Along with the litter and cleanup problems, they also pose a threat to many marine creatures, often times being ingested by turtles and even fish as the bags break apart into smaller pieces of plastic.

Your previous work on this issue has not gone unnoticed and the initial bag ban steps have effectively eliminated these detriments to our economy and environment in many stores around our island. However, the loopholes that allowed for thicker plastic bags are being taken advantage of by retailers who do not understand the true nature of the law. The replacements are not a true reusable bag and the thicker nature of them adds more plastic to the waste stream.

The Surfrider Foundation and its coalition partners agree that it would be better to ban all types of single-use plastic check-out bags and keep this law consistent with the policies on Maui, Kauai and the Big Island. Following successful bills in Portland, OR and Austin, TX, we ask that the definition of reusable bags be amended so that they are "a minimum of 4 mils thick" (up from 3 mils) and made of "nonfilm plastic."

Mahalo for your consideration on these amendments and the time you are putting into closing this loophole in a very important law.

Aloha,

Rafael Bergstrom

Surfrider Oahu Chapter Coordinator

MISC. COM. 2509

COUNCIL